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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/622,240	07/18/2003	George Tzertzinis	NEB-208/9-US	3580
28986	7590	02/10/2006	EXAMINER	
HARRIET M. STRIMPEL; NEW ENGLAND BIOLABS, INC. 240 COUNTY ROAD IPSWICH, MA 01938-2723				POPA, ILEANA
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
				1633

DATE MAILED: 02/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/622,240	TZERTZINIS ET AL.	
	Examiner Ileana Popa	Art Unit 1633	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-47 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) ____ is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) 1-47 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-47 are pending.

It is noted that claim 31 is missing.

Election/Restriction

2. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:

- I. Claims 1-20, and 47, drawn to a method of producing an hsiRNA mixture, classified in class 514, subclass .44
- II. Claims 21-28, drawn to a method of creating a library of DNA clones from a hsiRNA mixture, classified in class 435, subclass 91.1.
- III. Claims 29 and 30, drawn to a method of obtaining a large double-stranded RNA molecule, classified in class 514, subclass 44
- IV. Claims 32-41, drawn to a method of reducing the expression of target gene in an eukaryotic cell using DNA clones, classified in class 514, subclass 44.
- V. Claims 42-44, drawn to a method of identifying an hsiRNA mixture which is capable of increased gene silencing of a target gene, classified in class 435, subclass 375.
- VI. Claims 45 and 46, drawn to a method of identifying a sequence corresponding to an siRNA from a cleavage site in a mRNA, classified in class 435, subclass 375.

3. Should Group I be elected for prosecution, species election is required as follows:

This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention:

- A. a range of 0.005:1 to 25:1 (claim 3) or 0.0125:1 to 10:1 (claim 4);
- B. manganese (claim 5), nickel, cobalt or cadmium (claim 8);
- C. less than 6 hours (claim 9) or less than 2 hours (claim 10);
- D. greater than 50% (claim 14) or greater than 65% (claim 15);
- E. at least 50% of fragments capable of cleaving mRNA (claim 18) or at least 75% of fragments capable of cleaving mRNA (claim 19)

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species from each of the above groups of species A to E for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable.

Currently, claims 1, 2, 1-13, 16, 17, 20 and 47 are generic.

Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include

all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

In addition to the above:

Should manganese be elected for prosecution, a further species election is required as follows:

- 5-10 mM (claim 6) or 10-20 mM (claim 7).

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claims 5 is generic.

Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

4. Should invention of Group II be elected for prosecution, a further species election is required as follows:

The presently pending claim 28 is generic to a plurality of disclosed patentably distinct species comprising:

- pUC19 and Litmus vector.

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species, even though this requirement is traversed. Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of

the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

5. Should invention of Group IV be elected for prosecution, a further species election is required as follows:

This application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention:

- A. reducing expression of a target gene causes a phenotypic change (claim 33) or is a tool for analyzing a biochemical pathway (claim 37);
- B. non-human animal (claim 40) or transgenic animal (claim 41).

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species from each group of species A and B for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claims 32 is generic.

Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims

are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

In addition to the above:

Should phenotypic change be elected for prosecution, a further species election is required as follows:

- treatment for a disease (claim 34), enhancement of a desired characteristic (claim 35), or diagnostic for a selected phenotype (claim 36).

Applicant is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, claim 33 is generic.

Applicant is advised that a reply to this requirement must include an identification of the species that is elected consonant with this requirement, and a listing of all claims readable thereon, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered nonresponsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

Should applicant traverse on the ground that the species are not patentably distinct, applicant should submit evidence or identify such evidence now of record showing the species to be obvious variants or clearly admit on the record that this is the case. In either instance, if the examiner finds one of the inventions unpatentable over the prior art, the evidence or admission may be used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) of the other invention.

6. The inventions of Groups I-VI are patentably distinct from each other because they are directed to methods that are distinct both physically and functionally, are not required for one another and result in different products. Steps and compositions required to produce an hsiRNA mixture, to create a library of DNA clones, to obtain a large double stranded RNA molecule, to reduce the expression of a target gene, to identify an hsiRNA mixture which is capable of increased gene silencing, or to identify a sequence corresponding to an siRNA from a cleavage site in a mRNA are all different from each other and result in different outcomes. Therefore, each method requires a different search and a different examination.

The species election is proper because they require different searches in the patent and nonpatent literature, and a search and examination of anything more than one of the above designated species would be a serious burden for the examiner.

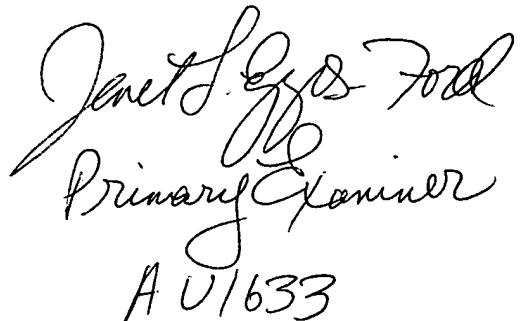
7. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art because of their recognized divergent subject matter, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ileana Popa whose telephone number is 571-272-5546. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00 am-5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dave Nguyen can be reached on 571-272-0731. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Ileana Popa



Janet S. Gys Ford
Primary Examiner
A U1633